

# Things of the Kingdom and of Jesus the Christ - 3

## The Old Testament in Acts

*The ‘things of the kingdom and Jesus the Christ’ are preached throughout Acts: from the third verse to the last verse of the book. This series of articles on Acts explores these ‘things’.*

### A Revolution of Faith

The Acts of the Apostles is a dynamic and dramatic account of the spread of the gospel immediately after the ascension of Jesus Christ. He had been handed over by the Jews to be crucified by the Romans, but raised from the dead by God and proved to be the promised Christ and saviour.

The inspired account in Acts describes the words and activities of the apostles who witnessed to the gospel as instructed by Jesus himself. In addition to being personal witnesses they also had the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them both to do miracles and to preach the true gospel.

The gospel that they preached had a revolutionary effect. Apostles were described as *‘turning the world upside down’* (Acts 17:6). However, the gospel had been preached thousands of years before (Galatians 3:8) and many of the important events had been foretold in the Old Testament. This included the suffering, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the disbelief of the Jews and the offer of salvation to non-Jews (Gentiles).

Consequently, the text of the book and words of the apostles often refer back to the Old Testament. The table opposite lists the Old Testament verses which are quoted directly in the book of Acts, and the events to which

they refer. This shows that the gospel message was not new to the first century; it was very firmly grounded in the Old Testament. It is therefore essential to study the Old Testament because it is the foundation for the New Testament.

### A Constant Source of Truth

A prime example is the speech of Stephen just before his martyrdom. This is outlined in Acts chapter 7, and taken in its entirety from the Jewish scriptures – our Old Testament. There are over 50 references to writings of Moses and David, the history books and prophets. Stephen was speaking to Jews but these scriptures are just as relevant to Gentiles.

In his letters to Jewish and Gentile converts (e.g. Romans, Corinthians, Galatians) the Apostle Paul makes continual reference to the Old Testament when teaching basic principles about Christian belief and conduct. You would not expect to understand a novel if you started reading it part-way through. You would not know the context, characters or their history. Similarly, it is impossible to understand the gospel message without knowing the Old Testament prophecies and promises.

It does matter. There is only one true gospel message, and people who change it are in danger of being accursed (Galatians 1:8–9). So let us base our faith on the whole Bible.

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## Old Testament passages quoted word-for-word in Acts

Setting	Acts	Old Testament	Subject
Apostles replacing Judas Iscariot	1:20	Psalm 69:25, 109:8 Psalms named	Prophecy about Judas Iscariot
Peter's speech on Day of Pentecost	2:17-21	Joel 2:28-32 Joel named in v. 16	Prophecy about Holy Spirit gifts
	2:24-28	Psalm 16:8-11 David is named	Resurrection and ascension of Jesus
	2:34-35	Psalm 110:1 David is named	Exaltation of Jesus
Peter's speech to Jews	3:22-23	Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19 Moses is named	Moses' prophecy of Christ the special prophet
	3:25	Several verses in Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14	'In your seed shall all families of the earth be blessed' – promise of God to Abraham which was repeated
Peter to the Jewish rulers	4:11	Psalm 118:22	Exaltation of Jesus
	4:25-26	Psalm 2:1-2 David is named	Prophecy of Jesus being opposed
Stephen's speech before his martyrdom	7:2-59	12 Old Testament references from Moses and prophetic books.	History of Jewish people, especially disobedience, culminating in their rejection of the promised anointed one
Words read by Ethiopian eunuch	8:32-33	Isaiah 53:7-8 Isaiah named (v 30)	Prophecy of sufferings of Christ
Paul preaching at Antioch	13:22	Psalm 89:20	God's testimony about David
	13:33	Psalm 2:7 Second Psalm named	The exaltation of Jesus
	13:34	Isaiah 55:3	Resurrection of Jesus
	13:35	Psalm 16:10 Referred to as 'another psalm'	Resurrection of Jesus
	13:41	Habakkuk 1:5 Referred to as 'the prophets'	Warning to unbelievers
	13:47	Isaiah 49:6	Salvation extended to Gentiles
James with the apostles	15:16-17	Amos 9:11-12	Gentiles can be saved
Paul before the council	23:5	Exodus 22:28	Part of the Law
Paul to Jews in Rome	28:26-27	Isaiah 6:9-10	Disbelief of Jews